VISIT…

THE ALCHEMIST'S EYRIE

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet,Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

INTRODUCTION

"Don't be deceived. Very bad things can come in small packages, as well."

—Durzh the Alchemist

The Alchemist's Eyrie takes the characters into a fortified dwarven tower, where they are sent to recover some needed items. When they arrive, they discover the tower has been captured recently by a warband of renegade lycanthrope dwarves. Between the interlopers and the remaining traps set by the late owner, the characters may find themselves in deep, despite the lack of head clearance.

ENCOUNTER LEVELS

The Alchemist's Eyrie is a short adventure for a party of four or so, totaling between 24 and 28 levels of experience. With slight adjustments of creature power and ability, the scenario can be matched up to parties of somewhat greater or lesser strength. If you have a party of beginning adventurers, replace the lycanthrope dwarves with orcs or kobolds, using the dwarven abilities as a sort of template. Likewise, a troglodyte raiding party can be developed that will challenge 3rd- and 4th-level parties.

To make the creatures more of a threat, have them all take hybrid wererat form as soon as combat begins, instead of letting the transformation be triggered by events.

The Alchemist's Eyrie should be playable in a single evening's session.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual* to use this adventure. You will also need to reference the map on page 13 (or downloadable separately from www.wizards.com/dnd). No additional materials are necessary.

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase when appropriate. Unshaded boxes contain important information for you, including special instructions. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form; full monster statistics are in the appendix in alphabetical order.

BACKGROUND

Durzh is—well, was—a renowned dwarven alchemist who hailed from a nearby dwarven stronghold.

Paranoid, surly, and antisocial, Durzh was nonetheless one of the most brilliant minds the dwarves had in the realm of alchemy.

The Alchemist's Eyrie centers on a tower built by and for Durzh by his people. Here, in relative seclusion, Durzh was able to perform research and develop his strange concoctions, undisturbed by the noise and earthshaking industry common in large dwarven underground cities. Since his research and wares were very valuable to the dwarves, he was given a garrison of soldiers to guard the fort, although they had to abide by his rather strict rules of conduct.

Recently, Durzh worked on a remedy for a contagious illness that had been plaguing his home stronghold. Through the effects of his medicinal potions, the disease was contained and thought to be cured. The dwarven healers were wrong, however; the disease was merely contained. It has now broken out again, and the stronghold needs more medicine to distribute among the populace to put an end to this illness for once and for all.

Sadly, Durzh's fame has become widely known. A variety of merchants drop by his tower from time to time to barter for his wares. They then transport these throughout the land. As Durzh's fame spread, the rumors of his wares and his cures for illness eventually reached the evil ears of a pack of dwarves afflicted with lycanthropy.

These dwarves—as well as a solitary gnome they "recruited"—were infected by a wererat deep in their tunnels, and now they are wererats as well. They came to Durzh in the dead of night and assaulted the tower. They slaughtered the guards, captured Durzh, and demanded that the alchemist help them. They wanted him to find not a cure for their disease, but rather a way to control the side effects better. He refused, and was slain.

Enter the characters.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters approach the tower and discover that Durzh and his guards are dead. They can still save the day, however, by entering the tower and defeating the lycanthropes, then bringing Durzh's books and alchemical supplies back to the stronghold.

Time is of the essence. The longer the characters take to assault the tower, the worse the illness becomes in the dwarven stronghold. Also, if the characters leave the tower unguarded to go get more supplies, the wererats will steal everything of value and make good their escape. The wererats don't want this tower, just the knowledge within it.

The lycanthrope dwarves are not the only opposition: Durzh's paranoia caused him to leave several traps. Some of these the evil dwarves have already sprung; others they are still figuring out, and these others are potential threats to the characters.

CHARACTER HOOKS

There are several possible ways to pull your players into this adventure.

Aiding the Sick: The easiest method to involve the players, and the one that gives the characters the most moral imperative to retake the tower, is to have them be hired by the dwarves. The dwarves send them as messengers to tell Durzh what they need and when they need it, but when they arrive at the tower, they find Durzh in no condition to fulfill the order. Also, since the dwarves live in a large stronghold, the characters can purchase pretty much anything they desire. If the PCs need one, the dwarves will loan them a donkey to transport the medicine back. The pay for returning with medicine is 500 gp apiece; the price is this high because the dwarves expect the characters to push themselves hard day and night to be as timely as possible. (Due to great precautions taken by the dwarves, there is no chance that the characters contract the plague.)

Happenstance: The characters can quite easily just stumble across the tower in their travels. Seeing a tower with a bunch of dead dwarves around would incite curiosity. Similarly, the characters might be part of a caravan looking to buy some of Durzh's wares, and thus arrive at the tower shortly after the yuan-ti take it over.

Stalking the Afflicted Dwarves: The characters can also get involved by virtue of trying to wipe out a lycanthrope colony. This might be a long-term plan, or they could be informed by a peasant that a group of wererats was seen moving through the lands. Regardless, the PCs track a band of wererats to this tower, and therein they can try to destroy them.

Durzh Is an Old Contact: The wererats might have failed in their first attempt to take the tower. Durzh could send word to the characters that he needs assistance . . . and the characters arrive just a little too late.

Other Background Information

Characters who have dealt with Durzh directly or who have dealt with merchants who buy from him might already know some of the facts given below. Otherwise,

if the PCs try to glean additional information from the dwarves of the stronghold using Gather Information checks, they can learn the following facts about the dwarf and his tower:

DC 5: Durzh is an expert alchemist. He lives in a tower built for him near the top of a waterfall.

DC 10: Durzh is somewhat of a loner, preferring to be away from the stronghold to do his work. Thus the tower had to be designed to be defensible and self-sufficient.

DC 15: The dwarves in the tower are somewhat paranoid; don't be surprised if you get a rude welcome, at least initially. The tower is equipped with water-powered machinery and houses about ten dwarves.

DC 20: The tower is extremely defensible, equipped with four ballistae around the walls and a fifth in a turret on top. There is no direct access into the tower other than through the main doors. Durzh worked alone, locked up in his subterranean lab; he trusted no one else to enter.

DC 25: Durzh is very paranoid, even of his own people, and hired some of the best dwarven engineers to work on the tower. Expect traps, even in places that should be clear of obstacles.

DC 30: Oh, yeah—don't be offended if they don't invite you in for an ale. Some of you folk are pretty tall, and rather than make you stoop, they'll greet you outside.

DURZH'S TOWER

The following text describes the environment in which *The Alchemist's Eyrie* takes place.

Outside & Approaching (EL 6 if combat occurs)

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters first see the tower:

Your destination is a solid-looking circular fortress, perched on lichen-covered rock not too far from the top of a rather steep slope. A raging mountain river flows swiftly by to the northwest, passing close to the tower and then tumbling down into the ravine below with a thunderous roar. A mist constantly rises from the gorge, proudly displaying a rainbow in the bright sun.

As you get closer, you see that the so-called "tower" is solidly built. In fact, it rather reminds you of a dwarf: short, wide, and unlikely to get knocked down. Only a dwarf would consider something so short to be a tower. It is no more than 30 feet high and some 60 feet or so across at the base. The top of the tower is covered by a stone roof armored with spikes, and capped by what appears to be perhaps an observation post. Small archer-slit windows are set around the periphery, and a stair rises to the entrance, which faces the southwest.

There are several dwarves working outside the main entrance. One of them sees you approaching and points, apparently speaking with his companions.

The creatures outside are four of the main body of the wererat pack. At first glance, they appear perfectly normal. They are typical dwarves, wearing somewhat baggy clothes and chain shirts, with dwarven waraxes tucked in their belts or slung over their shoulders on straps. The chain shirts were custom-forged by the wererat dwarves. The armholes come around farther to the front than normal, and the body of the shirt sags in strange areas. This is because they have been carefully designed to be wearable in both their normal dwarf and hybrid rat forms. The chain shirts don't look that great, but the dwarves don't care.

The wererats are taking care of (read: perpetrating unspeakable crimes upon) five of the dwarves they killed when taking over the tower, but they feign innocence when the party approaches. The wererat who speaks for the party claims they are a group of merchants, here to barter medicinal herbs (and knowledge of how to use them) for some of Durzh's famous potions. When they arrived, they found the tower in this state. They are tending to the dead while their leader tries to ascertain who would do such a thing. It is possible that the culprits are still inside.

The dwarven corpses show a mix of clean-edged wounds (from axes) and rougher, tearing wounds (from teeth). If a ranger or druid attempts to track, little can be found on the lichen-covered rock, although a Wilderness Lore check (DC 25) will show that there was no combat outside the tower.

If the characters look around, they can see a collection of crossbows near the steps leading up to the door. Several dwarven bodies lie about (having been dragged to their current positions). One of the bodies has been

Speaking in Character

Be sure to speak a little faster than normal when speaking as the wererat leader, and scrunch up your nose rather frequently.

Who Are These Villains?

Bloodbeard is the leader of the gang. He and his assistant were infected with lycanthropy several years ago. Always a bit unstable, Bloodbeard chose to embrace his new powers rather than try to find a cure for the disease. He abandoned his dwarven deity, embraced devil worship, and changed his name to match his new ideals.

Sgt. Gnash is Bloodbeard's assistant. He relishes his job as the master of discipline for the gang.

Speenar the Unlucky was recruited into the gang to fill the need for a rogue. Gnash and a few thugs abducted him, infected him, and kept him imprisoned until the disease had worked its will on his soul. He is now a willing, if still somewhat self-preserving, member of the gang.

The Big Imp is Bloodbeard's aide and advisor, sent from the hells to assist this convert. It seems the powers below consider Bloodbeard to have great potential.

The others are a bunch of dwarf/wererat thugs of no particular interest . . . yet.

flayed open (by a couple of hungry wererats). And, on the steps by the front door, is the corpse of a hairy creature, mostly melted and definitely not readily identifiable. This last is a wererat in hybrid form who was liberally doused with acid from a dwarf inside the tower (see area 10).

Creatures (EL 6): Four dwarven wererats are hanging around outside in their normal dwarven form.

D Dwarf Wererats (4): hp 10, 9, 8, 7.

If the characters seem suspicious, they can try to penetrate the wererats' disguises. A Sense Motive check reveals the fllowing information, depending on the check result:

DC 12: The wererats are not merchants at all (they have none of the accoutrements one might expect).

DC 18: The wererats care nothing for the dwarves and have no altruistic intent.

DC 25 (20 for a dwarf): The wererats reveal some subtle but noticeable undwarvenly behavior, perhaps in the way they hold or carry their axes.

A Spot check (DC 15) lets a character see the anomalies in the chain shirts the wererats wear; the wererats explain their armor by claiming to have foolishly patronized a one-size-fits-all armorer. A Spot check (DC 25) lets that character notice some small but revealing aspect of the wererats, perhaps a flare of red in an eye or teeth more pointed than normal for a dwarf.

Tactics: The wererats hope to gently usher the party into the tower, offering to show the characters the damage they found, meet their leader, search for the medicine the party needs, and so forth. If the characters go inside the tower, the wererats follow them in, pick up heavy crossbows as they enter the tower, and spring an ambush, trapping the PCs between themselves and a compatriot and the gang's impish advisor, currently inside.

If the characters figure things out and attack the wererats outside, the foes fight aggressively. One tries to make it inside the tower to warn the others. While fighting, the wererats try to get to their crossbows. Failing a way to do that, they have no fear of wading into melee with their waraxes.

The dwarves are a little concerned about their identity getting out; that's why they attacked at night and changed shape back to dwarves in the day. Outside, they try to maintain dwarven form. However, if a dwarf loses one-quarter of its hit points to damage, it automatically changes shape to the hybrid rat form and heals 1 hit point. Once a dwarf changes shape, other dwarves who see the change abandon all pretense and change shape as well.

Remember that the wererats are intelligent, and treat them as such. However, to the characters' advantage (just as it was to the advantage of the wererats a few hours ago), the sound of the waterfall prevents the noise of battle from alerting those lycanthropes still inside.

Area 1: Entryway

The main gate to the dwarven tower is no more than 5 feet high, but each door is also close to 5 feet wide. The first room inside is a very nasty kill-zone. There is an archer slit in the rear wall and the right-side wall, and a single reinforced door to the north. As the characters enter, this door hangs open. It shows scars from claws and axes, but it was not forced open.

In front of the door to the north is a spiked pit almost 5 feet wide and 10 feet long. The pit was covered by a stone slab, but that slab has been pulled back into the wall, exposing the pit. At the bottom of the pit lies some sort of humanoid wearing chainmail, fatally pierced through various parts of the body. The corpse is not easily identifiable, and climbing down into the spiked pit could be dangerous, since there are many very pointy spikes of various heights down there, leaving no place to put your feet. The wererats, of course, discourage any investigation into the identity of the corpse.

If the characters make any noise as they pass through

Inside the Alchemist's Eyrie

The interior of the tower is designed for dwarven height, not human height. After all, why waste good stone making extra headroom the dwarves won't use?

The comfortable head clearance in the top four floors is a mere 5 feet 3 inches. Anyone inside who is taller than that suffers a –1 penalty on attack rolls and Dexterity bonus for every 1 foot (or fraction thereof) a character is taller than the clearance. Arcane spellcasters taller than 5 feet suffer a 5% spell failure chance unless they kneel down to give their hands more room to gesture.

Anyone taller than 4 feet 6 inches using a swung weapon such as a sword, axe, or mace suffers an additional –1 attack penalty on attack rolls, due to the fact that they can't swing overhand and therefore have more limited options. Characters using shortbows and longbows suffer a similar penalty, having to hold their bows at an awkward angle. Characters using thrusting weapons such as spears and direct-fire ranged weapons such as crossbows do not suffer this penalty, nor do characters of races that are accustomed to underground environments, such as dwarves and gnomes.

These penalties apply only to the storage level through the top level. The bottom level, where Durzh has his lab, has extra clearance so he can set up complicated distillations, reflux purifications, and so forth. The ceiling is at least 8 feet high throughout the lab, and none of the above penalties apply.

here, the big imp in the pantry (area 7) notices their passage and prepares an ambush. If the characters enter in the company of the wererats outside, one of the villains ensures the imp notices their passage.

Characters must jump across the pit to get in; the wererats falsely claim that they tried to close the cover, but it was stuck fast.

Area 2: Office

This room was once where the dwarves would meet with caravan merchants and make their deals. Now it has been trashed. A nice table, now scratched and scraped, has been turned on its side. A pool of blood and a broken crossbow behind the table speak of the dwarf that died right here. Chairs are scattered about, some broken, others in good shape.

In the corner to the north is a dumbwaiter with two counterweighted boxes. This device allows the dwarves to quickly move supplies from the supply level to the outside, and vice versa. The interior of the dumbwaiter chimney is smooth and narrow. Anyone the size of an elf or smaller can descend inside the chimney by making a Climb check (DC 25). If the check fails, the character falls 20 feet to the bottom of the shaft. The dumbwaiter's boxes are 2 feet on a side, too small to contain any characters. The dumbwaiter cannot handle a load of more than 70 pounds. Any heavier, and the bottom breaks out and the contents fall to the bottom of the shaft.

Area 3: Gate Defense

This area is the secondary line of defense for the tower, where the dwarves hope to injure or kill those who have made it past the main gate. There is an archery slit here, and a couple of poles with hooks lie on the floor. The hooks are used to pull back the cover of the spiked pit; when fully closed, the cover pokes six inches under this wall and has two holes. A pair of dwarves can use the hooked poles to yank the cover back. Two of the tower's former occupants did, and succeeded in catching one wererat off guard. The victim tried to shapeshift to hybrid form, but did not do so in time to save his life.

Area 4: Common Room

Relatively untouched by the combat, this area looks for all the world like the interior of any dwarven tavern; it's what made the dwarven garrison feel most at home. Sturdy, rough-hewn tables and chairs are scattered about. There is a fireplace in the northeast corner. The last fire in it has been out for several hours.

A Spot check (DC 20) emables a character to notice that the second step down from this level to the barracks level is a different color from the other steps. This is not a trap; that particular step cracked and was recently replaced . . . but the PCs don't know that.

Area 5: Dining Room (EL 8 if the ambush is sprung here)

Also untouched, this area has a large, round table surrounded by seats. Although twelve dwarves lived in the tower, there are only eight chairs her; any fighter instantly realizes this is because some dwarves must remain on watch. Various stains on the wall indicate the dwarves would occasionally have food fights when overcome with boredom or ale.

Along the wall adjoining the kitchen is a set of shelves filled with plates, mugs, bowls, and eating utensils. A name written in graphite on the shelves marks each person's stuff. These are all very soldierly, which basically means that no one else but the owners would

The Ambush

If the characters trusted the dwarven wererats outside, the dining room is where they spring the ambush. All four wererats from outside open fire with crossbows, and the dwarf in the kitchen (area 6) and the big imp in the pantry (area 7) charge out of the kitchen door to attack. The dwarf attacks in hybrid rat form. Make an opposed Spot check against the Hide checks of the dwarf and imp to see if the party spots them before they charge. The dwarven wererat gets a +5 bonus on his Hide check, because he is concealed behind the imp, waiting for the imp's signal.

want to touch them. A box at the end of one of the shelves holds the dining utensils of the sergeant of the guard; while these are nicer than the other implements here, they are a far cry from fine china. Anyone who looks for Durzh's utensils here, and can read Dwarven, realizes they are not here (they are in his library).

Area 6: Kitchen (EL 6 if no ambush occurred)

The dwarven wererat sergeant Gnash is in here, rummaging through the various items looking for anything of interest. Not that there is—it's a dwarven kitchen. Dwarves aren't very good cooks, at least not in the opinion of any nondwarf.

Against the northwest portion of the wall is a set of shelves holding a great variety of pots and pans. The wall adjoining the dining room is where the oven and stove are. The last fire in the oven has been out for several hours. A clever venting arrangement lets smoke seep outside without weakening the defensibility of the tower.

If a character enters, Sgt. Gnash immediately changes shape and attacks, calling for help from the imp in the next room.

Sgt. Gnash: hp 17.

Imp (larger than normal): hp 25.

Area 7: Pantry

Filled with small amounts of various dried meats, grains, spices, and other such cooking stuff, this room has nothing to offer the adventurer . . . except maybe the small archery slit leading into the entryway. There is nothing of particular value here, and much of what is here has already been poisoned by the aforementioned imp.

Area 8: Water Closet

The dwarves living here have incredible luxury by adventuring standards. Each of these rooms has a primitive flush toilet and a sink, as well as a bar of high-grade soap (manufactured by the resident alchemist).

Area 9: Machinery and Plumbing

This area houses the water-powered machinery and piping for the tower. A large part of this machinery is designed to provide power to the turret on top of the tower. The rest of it pumps and provides water to the various bathrooms. On the main level, overhead pipes also bring water to the kitchen, and a floor drain takes wastewater back.

The machinery is not entirely closed off; mechanics needed to be able to access this area to perform maintenance. There are a few small crawlways on each level, but no one larger than a dwarf can crawl in more than a few feet. Dwarves and smaller creatures can laboriously make their way all through the tower machinery.

Area 10: Artillery Room (EL2)

This is the main defensive area of the tower, and as such, it has a trap in the stairwell to help prevent its capture if someone breaches the main gate.

The room is open, to make it easier for defenders to move around. Four automatic ballistae occupy the compass points for all-around defensive fire. These ballistae are mounted on universal joints attached to the very front of each device, so that they can swivel freely yet still fire through a very small archery slit. Casks of tar and oil sit by the fireplace, along with a pair of small cauldrons to transport boiling tar across the level. To the southeast is a rack of weapons holding everything from polearms to dwarven waraxes to crossbows. Crates of ballista bolt clips are stacked by the water machinery next to the stairwell.

An open window with a sluice hangs over the main gate. This feature is designed to make it easy for defenders to pour everything from flaming oil to boiling tar to acid on any attackers. The sluice ensures that the liquid sprays liberally on the tower's front porch instead of dribbling down the walls. A few casks of oil and a pair of empty glass jugs are nearby.

The stairwell continues up from here to the turret, which is a small cramped affair armed with another automatic ballista. There is barely enough room up here for a gunner and an assistant; the gunner aims and fires the ballista, while the aide rotates the turret using a

series of levers and helps load the ballista. The turret mechanism has been sabotaged and is not operational.

a Trap (EL 2): The top stair of the stairwell is a pressure trap (Search DC 25, Disable Device DC 27). If someone steps on it without having pressed the safety (just around the corner of the stairwell on the main floor, out of sight), a flask of acid drops from above. Anyone standing on the stair or within 5 feet of it can make a Reflex save (DC 30) to catch the flask before it hits something. If the flask is not caught, the character on the stair takes 3d6 points of acid damage (Reflex half DC 25) and those within 5 feet take 1d6 points of acid damage from spatter (Reflex half DC 20).

A critically injured dwarf named Eilif (Ftr1), breathing heavily, lies slumped against the wall near the fireplace, where embers still burn. He was the one who dumped the acid on the attacking wererat, in return for which a lucky crossbow shot by another wererat slipped through the window and pierced his lung. Knowing the tower had fallen, he sabotaged the turret, then spread oil across the floor and prepared to set fire to it as soon as anyone entered the room.

Eilif is borderline delirious. If someone triggers the acid trap, he awakens and sets fire to the oil. If not, characters entering the floor must make a Move Silently check (DC 20) to avoid waking him.

If the oil is fired, characters can beat a hasty retreat and avoid any serious damage, although the blaze will ruin the ballistae, weapons, and ammo, as well as kill the dwarf. If the characters manage to save the dwarf (by whatever means), divide an extra 300 experience points among the party.

Area 11: Cloakroom

The area around the stairwell is surrounded by curtains, which separate the individual rooms from the common areas. Toward the west is a water drain and a pair of coat racks; this is where the dwarves can hang their soggy gear if they need to. Four more dwarven bodies are in this general area; place them either in the stairwell or a few of the rooms.

Area 12: Bunk Room

This is a standard dwarven bunk room. Each room has two beds, a pair of footlockers, and a table with two chairs. The footlockers have all been plundered.

Area 13: Occupied Bunk Room

This room is like every other bunk room, except that a panicked dwarf named Snurry (Ftr1) is hiding in the rear. As soon as anyone enters the room, he attacks. If killed, he is not worth any experience points; however, the characters can earn 300 experience points to divide between them if they succeed in calming him down. He is panicked, though not unreasonable, and will join with the party to help if requested.

D Dwarf: AC 10, hp 4.

Area 14: NCO's Quarters

The door to this room is locked (Open Lock DC 21). The key can be found outside near the corpses with a Search check (DC 18).

Inside is a well-furnished room for a low-ranking dwarven military officer and head merchant. It has a nice bed, a desk, journals, maps, dressers, and a private table with candelabra. Some of the journals are mercantile ledgers, showing which items have been bought and sold by the tower denizens over the last twenty years or so.

The candelabra is of fine quality (worth 50 gp), and in one of the dresser drawers is a small bag containing a gold necklace with a pendant emblazoned with a dragon (valued at 300 gp).

Area 15: Washroom

The washroom is a full bath, having not only two of the aforementioned primitive toilet and sink, but also a nice shower (if you're less than 5 feet tall and enjoy showering in icy mountain stream water).

Area 16: Storeroom

This open area houses a bunch of supplies for the tower. Foodstuffs, ale, water, linen, maintenance materials: It's all here, arranged neatly and clearly labeled (in Dwarven). Valuable goods are stored in the cage (area 17). A secret door in the northeast corner (Search DC 30) leads to the alchemy stores (area 18).

a Trap (EL 3): There is a magic trap on the third step of the stairwell descending down from this level to the bottom level (Search DC 25, Disable Device DC 25). If sprung, the trap summons a Large earth elemental to attack the party. Since the level is underground, and it is unlikely that any of the characters are flying, the earth elemental gets its earth mastery bonus, which is included in its statistics block. Even though the elemental is much larger than this area would normally accommodate, it does not suffer a penalty for low clearance; in fact it seems to meld with the floor and ceiling both at will, giving it a very alien sort of appearance.

DEarth Elemental: hp 37.

Area 17: The Cage

This is a locked (Open Lock DC 18) steel-bar cage in which the finished the alchemical goods are stored. Currently there are twenty-two boxes in the combustibles portion, nine boxes in the grenades area (carefully packed in straw), and two casks in the corner. If opened, these contain:

ten boxes of twenty-four tindertwigs each
seven boxes of twelve sunrods each
five boxes of twelve smokesticks each
four boxes of six tanglefoot bags each
three boxes of six thunderstones each
two boxes of six alchemist's fires each
two casks of acid (sixteen vials' worth each)

There is also a strongbox (Open Lock DC 21) that opens with the same key used for the door to the NCO's quarters. It holds roughly 100 gp in assorted change.

Area 18: Alchemy Stores (EL 5)

This is where Durzh keeps his raw materials. There is a lot of wildly varied stuff in here: iron filings, alum, pure vinegar, holy water, weak acids and bases, and all sorts of concoctions that only an alchemist would be interested in. There are also containers of insects, worms, and a slough of anatomical bits dissected from various creatures, everything from a cat's tongue to bat ears to strips of the intestine of a destrachan. There is a single sprig of belladonna, enough for one character to avoid the effects of lycanthropy.

Included among all this stuff are the raw materials required for the medicine that Durzh brewed. If these are returned to the dwarves along with the recipe found in his library (area 20), the stronghold's alchemists can reproduce the medicine.

There is also a set of glass jars that contain the following: seven pearls valued at 100 gp each, 200 gp worth of ruby dust, 90 gp worth of jade dust, 350 gp worth of diamond dust, and 400 gp worth of powdered amber.

a Trap (EL 4): Among the various containers is a large box that has two living cockatrices inside. If they make a Listen check of DC 15, they sit very quietly until their box is opened.

DCockatrices: hp 24, 33.

Area 19: The Lab (EL 7)

This is where Durzh did his work. The entire area is filled with tubes, glassware, and assorted bizarre machinery. The mechanical contraptions in the center of the room allow for the automatic stirring, shaking, and agitation of various experiments. Much of the equipment has already been damaged, but barring another real nasty fight in this area, there is enough salvage here for someone to piece together an alchemist's lab (see page 110 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Bloodbeard, the leader of the dwarven wererats, is here, as is Speenar the Unlucky, their resident gnome rogue. Bloodbeard is in the library leafing through texts, while Speenar peruses the lab looking for anything particularly valuable.

DBloodbeard: hp 21.
DSpeenar: hp 18.

Tactics: Bloodbeard starts out casting bull's strength and protection from good (if the party fights the earth elemental, he already has these cast upon himself when they enter the room). He then casts silence on a likely-looking spellcaster, followed, if time permits, by doom on a tough-looking fighter. Then, being the fearless wererat dwarf that he is, he wades in with his +1 dwarven waraxe and starts killing. Bloodbeard fights to the death.

Speenar enjoys using his true strike spell to prepare a sneak attack, often in conjunction with ventriloquism or flare to distract the enemy. If things are going badly for Speenar, he runs for Durzh's Lookout (area 22), jumps out the window, and casts feather fall, floating harmlessly away into the waterfall's mist. If he does survive an attack in this manner, he can plague the characters for a long time to come.

Area 20: Library

This area has a set of shelves and a desk, complete with a pauper's set of dirty dishes. Durzh keeps his alchemical library and all his personal records here. Characters who take items from Durzh's library and study them may, at the DM's option, gain a +1 bonus on all future Alchemy checks.

Among the books in the library is Durzh's book of medicinal recipes. If the characters return this book, along with some ingredients from the alchemy stores (area 18), the dwarven alchemists back at the stronghold can recreate Durzh's work.

Area 21: Durzh's Room

Durzh has a set of three doors to provide a sound baffle between the lab and his bedroom. The third door is trapped with a crossbow trap (Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 30).

The interior of the room is a typical ascetic mad scientist's lair: messy, stinky, disorganized. A full search of the room turns up only one item of interest: a carved ivory plaque valued valued at 100 gp. This is the focus Durzh used for *Rary's mnemonic enhancer.*

Area 22: Durzh's Lookout

At other times, when his mood was good, Durzh would go here to gaze out at the outside world. An armored shutter here can be closed and locked, but at the moment it is open. It is through this open window that Bloodbeard and Speenar found their way into here.

Visible here is a long smear of blood, the last sign left by Durzh as his body was dragged to the window to be thrown out.

Area 23: Spillway

This very loud, very wet area opens onto the underside of the waterfall. A set of complex waterwheels and pipes here supplies the entire tower with power and water. Fighting here is extremely dangerous, and the details thereof are left to the Dungeon Master. Also note that the noise means all spells with verbal components have a 10% chance of failure.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The stronghold offers the characters 100 gp, instead of the originally promised 500 gp, as compensation for their efforts. They claim the rest of the money must be used to help brew the medicine. However, since Durzh was not a family dwarf, the party is welcome to keep whatever plunder they found. If the characters object to the pay cut, the dwarves remind them that legally, the tower and its contents are the property of the dwarven stronghold, and if the characters surrender all the plunder they found on stronghold grounds, they can receive the full payment.

The characters may also attempt to brew the medicine themselves, looking to gouge the dwarves for more money in their moment of crisis. Aside from not being either a lawful or a good thing to do, there is simply not enough time for the characters to succeed. The plague progresses, and the stronghold intends to put all of their best alchemists on the job. If the characters try, it will take too long, and the dwarves know it.

Whether the characters accept the partial payment cheerfully or refuse to accept it, the dwarves will offer to sell the tower to them for the bargain price of 30,000 gp. If this offer is declined, the dwarves send out a new war party to occupy the tower, mostly just because it's there.

APPENDIX: STATISTICS

DDwarf Wererats in Dwarf Form: CR 2; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 1d8+1; hp 8, 6, 9, 7; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atk +1 melee (1d10, dwarven waraxe) or +1 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); SA +1 against orcs and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits, shapeshifter; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8. Height: 4 ft.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Shapeshifter: heals 1 hp when changing to hybrid rat form (happens automatically if the dwarf loses 25% hp) and gains 1 hp from increased Constitution.

Possessions: Dwarven waraxe, oddly cut chain shirt, 4d10 gp.

DDwarf Wererats in Hybrid Dwarf-Rat Form: CR 2; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 1d8+2; hp 9, 7, 10, 8; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20 (touch 13, flat-footed 17); Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite) or +1 melee (1d10, dwarven waraxe); SA curse of lycanthropy, +1 against orcs and goblinoids; SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits, scent, damage reduction 15/silver; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8. Height 4 ft.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: Foes hit with bite or waraxe may

contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Scent: can detect foes within 30 feet.

Possessions: Dwarven waraxe, oddly cut chain shirt, 4d10 gp.

DPanicked Dwarf: CR 1/2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +2 melee (1d10+1, dwarven waraxe); SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9. Height 4 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +2; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells.

Possessions: Dwarven waraxe, pajamas.

DSgt. Gnash in Dwarf Form: Male dwarf Ftr2; CR 3; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atk +4 melee (1d10, dwarven waraxe) or +2 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); SA +1 against orcs and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ darkvision, dwarven traits, shapeshifter; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 12. Height 4 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Shapeshifter: heals 2 hp when changing to hybrid rat form (happens automatically if the dwarf loses 25% hp) and gains 2 hp from increased Constitution.

Possessions: Dwarven waraxe, oddly cut chain shirt, 11 pp.

DSgt. Gnash in Hybrid Dwarf-Rat Form: Ftr2; CR 3; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 2d10+4; hp 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20 (touch 13, flat-footed 17); Atk +5 melee (1d4, bite) or +4 melee (1d10, dwarven waraxe); SA +1 against orcs and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits, scent, damage reduction 15/silver; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 12. Height 4 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Scent: can detect foes within 30 feet.

Possessions: Dwarven waraxe, oddly cut chain shirt, 11 pp.

DThe Big Imp: CR 5; Tiny outsider; HD 6d8; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (touch 15, flat-footed 15); Atk +12 melee (1d4, sting); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, poison; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver, poison immunity, fire resistance 20, see in darkness, polymorph, regeneration 2; SR 5; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10. Height 3 ft.

Skills and Feats: Hide +19, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +5, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10; Dodge, Weapon Finesse (sting), Weapon Focus (sting).

Special Attacks: Poison: Fort save DC 13, initial damage 1d4 Dexterity, secondary damage 2d4 Dexterity.

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction: reduce damage from nonsilver, nonmagical weapons by 5. Poison Immunity: ignore all poison damage. Fire Resistance: ignore the first 20 points of fire damage taken each round. See in Darkness: always has full vision capabilities. Polymorph: can change into a monstrous spider or rat. Regeneration 2: all normal damage is subdual damage, and is healed at 2 points per round.

Possessions: None.

DEarth Elemental: CR 5; Medium-size elemental (way too tall to fit, but that doesn't matter); HD 6d8+12; hp 37; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 18); Atk +1 melee (1d8+8, slam); SA Push; SQ Elemental: AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +9, Spot +9; Power Attack.

Special Attacks: Push: may bull rush without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Special Qualities: Elemental: immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and critical hits.

Possessions: None.

DCockatrices (2): CR 3; Small magical beast; HD 5d10; hp 24, 33; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 11); Atk +4 melee (1d4–2, bite); SA Petrification; SQ Petrification immunity; SR 5; AL neutral; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9. Length 3 ft.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Special Attacks: Petrification: Fort save DC 15 or turn to stone.

Special Qualities: Petrification Immunity: cockatrices do not petrify other cockatrices.

Possessions: None.

DBloodbeard in Dwarf Form: Male dwarf Clr4; CR 5; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 4d8+4; hp 21; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +5 melee (1d10+2, dwarven waraxe) or +1 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); SA +1 against orcs and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits, shapeshifter; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 11. Height 4 ft. 6 in.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Lightning Reflexes.

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of lycanthropy: foes hit with waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Shapeshifter: heals 4 hp when changing to hybrid rat form (happens automatically if Bloodbeard loses 5 hp) and gains 4 hp from increased Constitution.

Spells Prepared (0/5/4): 0—these have already been used today; 1st—*cause fear, command, doom, obscuring mist, protection from good;* 2nd—*bull's strength, darkness, hold person, silence.*

Possessions: +1 dwarven waraxe, 17 pp, 4 gp.

DBloodbeard in Hybrid Dwarf-Rat Form: Clr4; CR 5; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 4d8+8; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20 (touch 13, flat-footed 17); Atk +6 melee (1d4, bite) or +5 melee (1d10+3, +1 dwarven waraxe); SA +1 against orcs and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Darkvision, dwarven traits, scent, damage reduction 15/silver; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 11. Height 4 ft. 6 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting orcs and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with bite or waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Darkvision: can see 60 feet in the dark. Dwarven Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against poison and spells. Scent: can detect foes within 30 feet. Damage Reduction: reduce damage taken from nonsilver, nonmagical weapons by 15 points.

Spells Prepared (0/5/4): 0—these have already been used today; 1st—*cause fear, command, doom, obscuring mist, protection from good;* 2nd—*bull's strength, darkness, hold person, silence.*

Possessions: +1 dwarven waraxe, 17 pp, 4 gp.

DSpeenar the Unlucky in Gnome Form: Male gnome Rog3/Sor1; CR 5; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 3d6+3 plus 1d4+1; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Atk +1 melee (1d6–1, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SA +1 against kobolds and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Low-light vision, gnome traits, shaepshifter; SR 13; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10. Height 3 ft. 6 in.

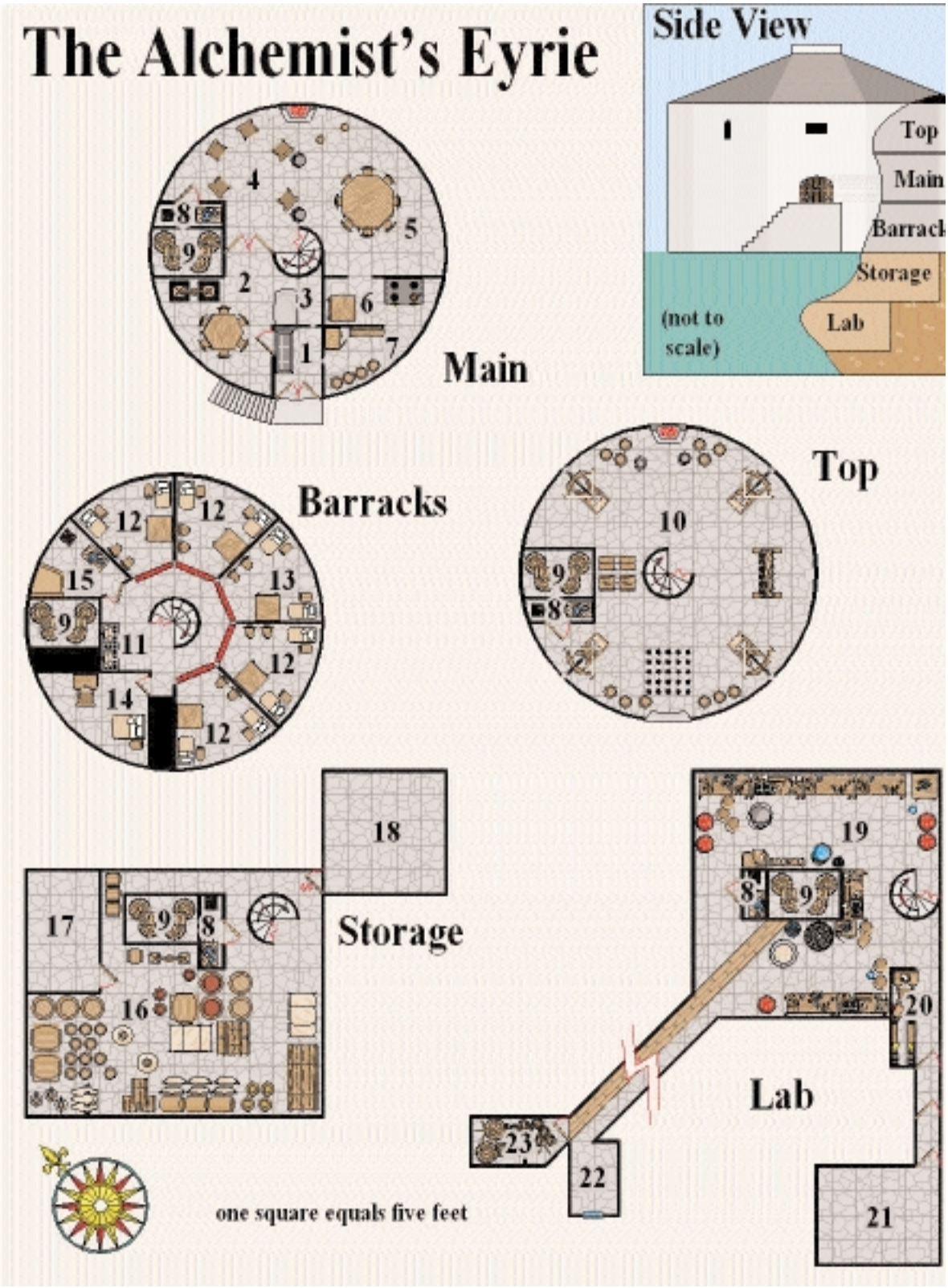
Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Disable Device +8, Hide +8, Listen +7, Open Lock +6, Spot +4; Dodge, Weapon Finesse (shortsword).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting kobolds and goblinoids (including half-orc characters). Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with short sword may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218).

Special Qualities: Low-light Vision: can see twice as far as humans in dim light. Gnome Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against illusions. Shapeshifter: heals 3 hp when changing to hybrid rat form (happens automatically if Speenar loses 5 hp) and gains 4 hp from increased Constitution.

Possessions: Ring of acid resistance, minor.

Spells Known (6/4): 0—*detect magic, flare*, read magic,*


The Alchemist's Eyrie
Side View
Top
Main
Barrack
Storage
Lab
(not to scale)
Main
Top
Barracks
Storage
Lab
one square equals five feet

mage hand, open/close; 1st—*feather fall*, true strike*, ventroloquism**.

*These spells have no somatic component and can be cast without suffering a chance of arcane spell failure.

D'Speenar the Unlucky in Hybrid Form: Rog3/Sor1: CR 5; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 3d6+6 plus 1d4+2; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20 (touch 14, flat-footed 17); Atk +4 melee (1d4–1, bite), +1 melee (1d6–1, short sword); SA +1 against kobolds and goblinoids, curse of lycanthropy; SQ Low-light vision, gnome traits, scent, damage reduction 15/silver; SR 13; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10. Height 3 ft. 6 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +17, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Dodge, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite), Weapon Finesse (shortsword).

Special Attacks: +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting kobolds and goblinoids. Curse of Lycanthropy: foes hit with bite or waraxe may contract lycanthropy (see *Monster Manual* page 218);

Special Qualities: Low-light vision: can see twice as far as humans in dim light. Gnome Traits: +2 bonus on saving throws against illusions. Scent: can detect foes within 30 feet. Damage Reduction: reduce damage taken from non-silver, nonmagical weapons by 15 points.

Possessions: Ring of acid resistance, minor.

Spells Known (6/4): 0—*detect magic, flare*, read magic, mage hand, open/close;* 1st—*feather fall*, true strike*, ventriloquism**.

*These spells have no somatic component and can be cast without suffering a chance of arcane spell failure.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edward Bolme is not a dwarf. He's too tall, too light, and couldn't grow a decent beard until he reached his thirties. On the other hand, he does know what it's like to bonk his head repeatedly on low ceilings. He's written for a variety of games, including *Paranoia*, *Castle Falkenstein*, *Cyberpunk*, *Cybergeneration*, and *Necroscope*. His fiction work includes *Title Deleted for Security Reasons*, *The Wind Blows Also Softly*, and the forthcoming short stories "The Dragon's Paw" and "The Dagger of Chaos," both due out in 2001. His next novel should be released in March 2002.